

In Summer My Hair Turns White

In summer my hair turns white
in the sun, I look like an old man,
like my father. That frightens me.
And some of his age is transferred
onto me, it seems. I don't have
the lust in movement, running and such.
I sit, like an old man, writing poems.
Peculiar thought: If he could see me;
what would he feel? Write him a card,
invite him down. No. He would not come.
Write him a letter, enclose a snapshot.
Where are my thoughts taking me today?
I was thinking of him just now, courting
my mother. He never talked of that.
Another generation. That's what it is.
A whole generation stands between us,
that's part of it; what is the other part?
I'm full of questions today. So was he.
He hated fishing. Said he didn't mind
being out in a boat, five in the morning,
but to kill something for sport! Pious,
call it. Though the word doesn't satisfy me.
Nor did it him. He went to church, but aloof;
he'd ape the preacher, not putting much stock
by his words. In his work he was a pious man,
you might say that. And today? Yes, today.
I suppose he is this minute watering
the lawn in front of his box-car house
in the South section of St. Louis,
talking with the neighbors, a little aloof.
A long way off. I got a long way off.
I was saying. In summer my hair....

-- Eric Pfeiffer